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# Commonweal
A Weekly Review of Public Affairs, Literature, and the Arts
THIRTY-FOURTH YEAR OF PUBLICATION

## week by week

### REALITY AND THE IMAGE

IN ANY LARGE, complicated and confusing issue, it occasionally happens that the small incident or remark can reveal and crystallize the larger truths. Within the last several weeks, several incidents, slight in themselves, did suggest some of the reasons behind the Soviet's insistence that there be a summit meeting and the United States demurral even as it made grudging concessions.

The reasons against having a summit meeting are formidable and Secretary of State John Foster Dulles has stated them frequently and forcefully. In addition to his arguments there lingers still the public memory of the hangover which followed the heady hopes of the 1955 Geneva conference. Nevertheless, we seem to be backing into another conference, urged on by public opinion abroad, divided opinion at home, and the Soviet's barrage of needling invitations. Although Mr. Dulles still speaks in terms of whether there should be such a conference, most political judgments that issue from Washington are in terms of when the conference should take place, what questions are open to such spotlighted discussion, how much preparation is needed, who will attend, and even how an actual or projected conference would influence the '58 Congressional elections.

In the meantime, the position that each country adopts toward a summit conference becomes part of the public image it presents to the world. It is an obvious truth that the projected image, particularly of a country shielded from outside inspection, may be at a great remove from the reality. But it is also true that the image has its own effect and that, as a measure of achievement and failure in international politics, it is a fact of some significance.

These are truths that the present Soviet leaders have accepted and employed with notable success recently. And this aspect of Soviet behavior is symbolized in a trivial detail, the picture which showed Nikita Khrushchev being elected Premier of the Soviet state. While members of the legislature, including the replaced Nikolai Bulganin, raise their hands to elect Khrushchev unanimously, he sits with head bowed in a posture of humility and modesty.

REMEMBERING those who were killed, exiled or deposed in Khrushchev's march to power, it is easy to wax indignant about this picture, to question his statement that "I . . . shall not spare strength, health or life to serve you," and ask whose strength, health and life he is referring to. Nevertheless, the picture does represent, to some real degree, the ability of the Soviet leaders to cover past and present aggressions with peaceful words and programs.

At approximately the time this picture was taken, Mr. Dulles was testifying on our foreign aid mutual security program before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. In the midst of his generally admirable testimony Mr. Dulles was asked if Russia gained influence and prestige from the Bolshoi Ballet which it sent to other countries. The question must be seen in the context of the recent, mutual agreement to develop and extend cultural exchanges. And so must the reply of Mr. Dulles, who answered that, since every significant aspect of Russian life is controlled by the government, it seemed clear to him that the Bolshoi Ballet was being used "primarily" to strengthen the efforts of international Communism.

Such a response to a question concerning the Bolshoi Ballet is essentially irrelevant, and it seems based on a lack of awareness. But it scarcely calls



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into question Mr. Dulles' impressive knowledge, which even unfriendly critics recognize. It does, however, symbolize the muddling response to which Mr. Dulles is given; it suggests an inability to gauge the reaction to his comments, the intransigence and inflexibility which occasionally seem to insist upon complexities while asserting simplicities.

The contrasting attitudes which are suggested by these minor incidents correspond roughly to the impressions the U.S.S.R. and the United States are making as they approach the summit table. And if the Soviets are to suspend unilaterally the testing of nuclear weapons, as they promise, they will be doing on a truly impressive scale what they have been doing so successfully on lesser questions. The questions here are questions of policy, of course, but they are not only that. They are also the lesser, but still important questions of presenting a policy or projected policy to best advantage. In this area our country would seem to lack the spokesmen it so badly needs.

## DISREGARDING THE SIGNALS

WHAT WOULD it take to bring about a marked upturn in the American economy at this stage? One seer has figured that if every one of the constituents of the "Ike Clubs" of six years ago were to buy a new car in the next three months, the recession would be over. In a similar vein is the proposal of a "Spend-Your-Money" Week. The President himself has expressed the hope that more and more citizens will now set about buying the things they need. There is, to be sure, considerable purchasing power available, for personal savings are at an all-time peak.

If the influencing of these processes were a science, and economic trends under the present system followed iron laws, the way out would be clearly indicated. Reduce prices and the public would surge back into the market. But producers, middle men and retail outlets show little disposition to make such cuts. Savings therefore remain in banks, credit unions, building and loan associations and the like. As the recession deepens, it appears that refusal to spend reflects fear for the future much more than it indicates resistance to high price tags.

Back of this widespread lack of confidence are certain facts: by mid-March unemployment was increasing in four-fifths of the hundred and fifty major employment areas in the United States; the giant American steel industry is operating at fifty

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per cent capacity; stocks of unsold new cars are about double the normal figure, while the industry is producing thirty per cent fewer cars than it was a year ago. To counterbalance this, the rush to buy frocks in the chemise style and women's tinted stockings with accompanying accessories accomplishes but little.

Many of our business leaders seem to believe that this country is still operating under its ancient laissez-faire, free enterprise system. They are more puzzled than most that inflation and recession continue to go hand in hand. Ignoring decades of protective tariffs, and such more recent elements as minimum wages, crop supports, regulatory agencies, credit and banking controls, they wonder why supply and demand does not bring about the price cuts that would start free enterprise on a new upward surge. As a prominent banker put it recently: "Rising prices at a time of declining business volume disregard the signals of our free enterprise system." But has America's economy for years been free enterprise in the Manchester sense, or rather a compound of regulations, quasi-monopolies, industry price-setting practices, and governmental protection?

## BANNED BACCALAUREATE

IN PORTLAND, Maine, Bishop Daniel J. Feeney recently told Catholic pupils in the public high schools that they and their parents should not attend or participate in "baccalaureate" services because these are in fact religious affairs. The format of the services, the Bishop said, "is always that of New England Congregationalism . . . and thus violates the conscience of those who are not products of this tradition."

We have not seen the program for the baccalaureate service in the Portland public high school system, but we feel sure the Bishop's description of them is quite correct. When cases like this come up, as they do every now and then, many people often learn to their surprise that what they had always thought of as social or civic affairs actually take the form of Protestant services, with prayers by local ministers, hymn-singing and, in many cases, readings from the King James version of the Bible. In some of these cases, the following of a Protestant pattern in official gatherings may reflect anti-Catholic or anti-Jewish sentiment; more often, we are inclined to think, it simply means that no one has ever questioned the procedure or thought very seriously about the fact that those with non-Protestant convictions could not participate in these religious services.

In this case, Bishop Feeney was immediately denounced by at least one Protestant minister on the grounds that his ban on Catholic participation was "divisive." This is a judgment with which we cannot agree, and we do not think most Protestants will either, if the matter is put to them fairly. Catholics and Jews cannot in conscience participate in Protestant services, and the majority—whether Catholic, Jewish, or, as in this case, Protestant—should never attempt to impose its religious views on the minority, in Portland or anywhere else.

When constitutional norms and the conscientious views of the minority are violated, as in this case, we do not see how the man who protests can justly be called "divisive." Ours is a pluralistic society, made up of people with varying religious convictions. The man is truly divisive who refuses to recognize and allow for this fact.

## BACK TO TRADITION

DEVELOPMENTS here at home and overseas have combined to focus a new spotlight on the nation's schools. Headlines on juvenile delinquency have coincided with feature stories on the Soviet Union's scientific and scholastic superiority to make these institutions the butt of the most sweeping criticism. The recent editorial in *Life* and the McCann-Erickson display statement on education typify the trend. Both go back to theories that led to the Great Books idea and the changes introduced by Robert M. Hutchins at the University of Chicago—to the basic conviction that there are specific elements in our Western cultural heritage with which every student should be familiar.

*Life* concludes a scathing editorial attack on the influence of John Dewey and his disciples this way: "Most of all we need to do some thinking about the true ends of education." The above-mentioned advertising agency declares: "If we are to project these economical and technical strengths in the shaping of a world peace . . . , we must advance the study of history, languages, literature and philosophy with equal zeal." Without attempting to make John Dewey the scapegoat for our many educational and community failings—or neglecting such essentials as adequate salaries and plant—there is much to be gained from a thoroughgoing scrutiny of the basic educational objectives of our American schools.



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## SIGNS AND WONDERS

THE AMENDMENT restricting billboards along the new thirty-eight billion dollar Federal-state highway system is still alive, at this writing, but its prospects are not so good. The "save the scenery" provision, which would grant a one-half of one per cent bonus on Federal grants to the states regulating billboard advertising on the new highways, barely survived two attempts on its life in the Senate, and is now in the not very friendly hands of a Senate-House conference committee. Three of the five Senators on this committee have already cast votes against the anti-billboard amendment.

In favor of the billboards is an unusual alliance of businessmen, advertisers and unions—all of whom have a clear occupational interest in these roadside signs. Curiously, though, the argument most passionately invoked is one of high principle—that of States' Rights. The States' Rights adherents —some of them quite recent converts—believe that any limitation by the Federal government on the rights of the states, or individuals, to put up signs on these highways however they please, even though the Federal government is paying ninety per cent of the highway costs, is downright tyranny.

It is hard to see how a one-half of one per cent incentive towards more beautiful roads amounts to an abuse of Federal power. The pro-billboarders, we suspect, are less concerned with any delicate questions of Federal-state sovereignty than they are with the question, admittedly quite legitimate, of possible profit or loss to themselves.

A year or so ago, when the debate over billboards on the new highways had just begun, with nature-lovers supplying the loudest voice against, one Washington wag asked who could withstand a united front of ladies and naturalists. It seemed a fair question at the time, but it has been answered all too easily.

## AFTERMATH ON PRATO

TWO WEEKS AGO we commented on the now-famous case of the Bishop of Prato, who was convicted by an Italian civil court of criminal defamation of character for describing as "public sinners" a couple, one until that time a practicing Catholic and one a former Catholic, for entering into a civil marriage. In our editorial we noted that the vast differences between Church-State relations in Italy and the United States made comment on the Prato affair more difficult; few Americans, certainly, would care to see this country imitate the Italian pattern. But we did view with considerable misgivings the way in which the state in this case was able to interfere with the traditional freedom of the pulpit and, in effect, silence the voice of a religious spokesman. Now, for the benefit of any readers who may have felt our fears were exaggerated, we wish only to note that half-a-dozen similar suits have already been filed in Italian courts against a parish priest who simply explained the teaching of the Church on the Sacrament of Marriage without mentioning any names at all. However vexing Americans may find certain aspects of this case, it should be clear that serious danger exists when the machinery of the state can be used to muzzle the voice of religion.

## CARDINAL STRITCH

HIS EMINENCE Samuel Cardinal Stritch has announced the date of his departure for Rome and the assumption of his new duties as Pro-Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, and The Commonweal wishes to add its voice to all those expressing sorrow at his leaving but pleasure and satisfaction at the elevation to high office which makes his leaving necessary.

Cardinal Stritch is the first United States-born prelate ever to serve as a Cardinal of the Roman Curia, the very important commission of Cardinals who deal with matters of Church administration. The Sacred Congregation of the Propagation of the Faith is concerned, of course, with mission affairs all over the world, and it is interesting that the appointment of the American Cardinal Stritch came just fifty years after the removal, in 1908, of the Church in the U. S. from its missionary status.

The Cardinal himself, when he was informed of his appointment, said, "It is clear that His Holiness, in honoring me, principally had in mind honoring the Church in the United States." As the Church in the United States has been honored, we give thanks, and as Cardinal Stritch himself has been honored, we rejoice again.

Cardinal Stritch will be missed in Chicago, to which, by the way, he would not say "farewell" but only "God bless you." Provisions as to the administration of the Archdiocese have not been decided yet, but in any case the Cardinal's good works for the Church will soon be done in Rome. May they be as much blessed as were his good works in Chicago.



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# The Lay Professor

*If a college is in one sense a community of scholars, then a Catholic college is two communities, one lay, the other religious, which are separate but not equal*

by OSCAR W. PERLMUTTER

I RECENTLY asked a group of Catholic lay professors what they thought of the situation of the layman in Catholic higher education. An experienced, brilliant, and deeply dedicated young professor responded at once: "Unwanted, unpaid, uncared for, and unpersoned."

The spontaneous candor and unconcealed disgruntlement of his response is an accurate index of the state of mind of lay professors throughout the country. Outspoken amongst themselves, but silent in public and before persons in authority, they wonder whether Catholic higher education will ever reverse the current policy of muddling through.

The essential problem, contrary to popular views which oversimplify the matter, is not pecuniary. The main issue is of a moral, psychological, and spiritual character. It has to do with the unwitting and, often, undesired disenfranchisement of the layman. If a college, in one sense, is a community of scholars, then a Catholic college is two communities, one lay, the other religious. They are separate but not equal, and the lay community is not a genuine community. Laymen are united in their shared dissatisfaction, but they are no more than a loose aggregation of persons forming a sub-group within the larger community of religious. They are second-class citizens, like trusted colonials or like successful Negroes in the United States.

What the lay professor wants, and Catholic higher education needs, is to integrate these two groups, the lay and the religious, into one genuine community of scholars. The real difficulties in the way, many of them quite obvious, are not insuperable if the integration is limited to the intellectual and temporal purposes of the college. After all, a secular community of scholars goes no further. The individual members comprising it lead diverse lives away from the campus. So, too, the religious community can enjoy its customary integrity as a religious community; it need only modify its ways with respect to the operation of the college or university.

Many religious educators may respond to these observations with indignation, and some may even be offended. Lay professors, they will say, are respected, cherished, and even loved. And it is true. "In fact, we always make them feel at home." But the layman is not at home in the *bona fide* sense of the term. He is more like a long-term guest, like the man who wandered in on the family one day and just stayed on.

The lay scholar does not seek benefactors or patrons. He does not want to be *just like* a member of the family, but simply a member of the family. He wants a proprietary interest in his labors justly commensurate with his status; he craves the rights and dignities of a person that one should expect to find in a community of free and equal persons and is prepared to accept the concomitant burdens and obligations.

IT SHOULD be clearly understood that the present unsatisfactory situation of the layman is not the result of design, deliberate neglect nor, certainly, of malice. No one intended that the layman should suffer; the layman's part in the educational system was simply not thought through. A popular assumption governing Catholic education, higher and lower, was the notion that the function of teaching belonged primarily, and some would have said exclusively, to persons with religious vocations. Once this is accepted as a controlling principle, then the only justification for lay professors is expedience, that is, when there is a shortage of religious vocations. Under a scheme which envisages a faculty composed exclusively of religious, the

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ultimate function of the layman is to become superfluous.

The validity of this controlling principle needs to be reexamined. Let us here restrict ourselves to the prudential side of the question. It is unrealistic to expect higher education to be conducted primarily by members of religious communities, not only because it would be unreasonable to expect a sufficient number of religious vocations, but for another and more fundamental reason. A religious vocation and an intellectual vocation are really quite distinct. One and the same person may possess both, but it does not happen frequently enough, a fact which often distresses religious superiors. There is not much that can be done about this situation, except to recognize it and accept it as a reality.

The exigencies of growth in the spiritual and religious life frequently conflict with growth in one's vocation as a scholar-teacher: preparation for the one does not necessarily constitute preparation for the other. Instead of a harmony between a religious and an intellectual vocation, there can be a serious tension. We tend to be misled on this point because of the wonderful harmony between religious life and intellectual growth in theology and philosophy. Since this is the field of concentration of priests, and since theologians and philosophers tend to be both articulate and authoritative, we easily accept the familiar generalization that religious training automatically fits one for teaching, a generalization that is based on obviously restricted experience. Indeed, it often does result in a harmony when these majestic studies are involved, but this is not the case in fields like mathematics, music, chemistry, physics, or language, as Father James Campbell, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Catholic University, observed to the last convention of the National Catholic Educational Association.

It is a uniquely difficult task to develop intellectual talents in such a way as to produce simultaneously both a good teacher and a good religious. It can be done, but few communities are set up to bring it about, and most inhibit the scholarly development of their members. This even holds true for the Order of Preachers and the Society of Jesus. I have seen too many well-qualified Dominicans and Jesuits bogged down with non-academic burdens, with administrative and temporal details. At best, the vast majority of the members of these orders sacrifice their own intellectual vocations in order to make possible the scholarly achievement of a few. If religious communities wish to engage in higher education, then they must qualify their members accordingly, or make some other arrangements, or stay out of the business. (I presume no one is pleading for inferior education with mediocrity aforethought.)

IN CONTEMPORARY society, higher education is predominantly a lay function. This is not a normative proposition, but a fact, a statistic. Whether to make the layman a part of Catholic higher education is no longer a proper object of deliberation. Granted the continued existence of Catholic higher education, the present problem is how best to use the layman, not whether to use him.

In this respect, Catholic colleges and universities are off to a bad start. Despite the natural abundance of native intellectual talent in America, they are systematically squandering the best lay intellectual vocations. For the most part, such vocations are not discovered, or else they are inadequately developed. When a lay scholar overcomes the obstacles and does bring himself to a high level of achievement, he finds there are comparatively few attractive positions available to him. Consequently, many gifted young Catholic intellectuals do not aspire to academic careers. Some, out of a sense of deep dedication, offer up their personal trials, and make the attempt, but the mortality rate in this group is high. As a graduate student immediately after World War II, I knew a good many young Catholic scholars who aspired to teach in Catholic higher education. At present, most of them are not teaching at all, some are in secular universities, and only a handful remained steadfast in their original intentions.

Assimilating outstanding scholars under present circumstances is extremely difficult. Like most gifted persons, they tend to develop strong and individualistic characters; they are idiosyncratic, outspoken, sensitive, and proud. Getting the most talented persons, therefore, involves difficult personnel problems. Religious superiors of colleges, accustomed to obedience and poverty (and in this country, to the Puritan ethic) as well as to a pedestrian intellectual life, are often caught off guard by the gifted lay scholar. The latter, on the other hand, is apt to generate friction in his first—often his last—teaching assignment. This applies not only to the lay scholar but also to clerical scholars from abroad.

The situation of the Catholic lay professor is quite desperate. He is discriminated against in public and private institutions, as well as in Catholic. In short, there does not seem to be any clearly defined place for him in the academic world. The Catholic lay intellectual in America takes an involuntary vow of poverty, lives in a community to which he does not belong, and works under conditions conducive to a slow and inglorious martyrdom. It is to their everlasting credit that some hardy souls stubbornly persist in their appointed tasks, and continue to dedicate themselves (and their families) to an intellectual apostolate. This is due, in part, to their own strength of character, to secular education, to Divine Grace, and only to a lesser



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extent to the Catholic system of higher education in America.

WHAT IS needed is a *Magna Carta* for lay professors. The first and most fundamental right should be that of equality of opportunity to participate fully in the deliberative affairs of the college or university. It would presuppose, as a prior condition, genuine membership in the academic community, and as a corollary the notion that rewards be made on the basis of personal merit and contribution to the common good of the college. The stress is on equality of opportunity.

The layman should be treated as a first-class citizen. His status should not automatically bar him from holding any office in the institution. The crucial point is not the actual holding of office, but the equal right to hold office, and most important of all, *the right to participate effectively in the formulation and implementation of basic policy.*

It is fairly common when a departmental chairmanship is left vacant for the religious faculty to decide—in what amounts to separate caucus—to groom some young, or some less competent, religious over the heads of the lay professors. If the department needs a new head, and if it is properly integrated, then the most qualified person should be selected, regardless of his status.

It is common for the religious faculty to make basic policy decisions without consulting the laymen. Sometimes no one even remembers to inform them of accomplished facts. Lay professors have told me of often learning about crucial decisions from the local newspapers or from reading the student bulletin board.

The danger to be avoided is the division of the faculty into two separate groups, two caucuses, one lay, the other religious, who bargain with each other in the manner of labor and management. Of necessity, there must be a ruling group and a group of followers in any form of social organization, but these should not crystallize into a caste system. Entrance into the ruling group should be equally available to all, and there should be a just rotation of offices based on merit and service. The lay professor should be enabled to identify completely with his institution, and on a parity with his religious colleagues.

The holding of office is only an example. There are other points of irritation. For example, who is to represent the college at public meetings and sundry academic functions? Must it inevitably be a member of the religious order? Suppose a field is involved in which a layman is more qualified. Yet laymen are hardly noticeable at such occasions, even in cases of institutions where laymen outnumber the religious by several times.

The second fundamental right of the lay professor (and the religious) is to have proper teaching conditions and adequate facilities and time for scholarly growth and for research. The consequence of overworking Catholic professors is disastrous. Courses become dull, uninspired, and unoriginal. Outstanding works, even in fields of direct Catholic interest, are written by non-Catholics. It is a curious fact that the better known Catholic scholars in America hold professorships in secular institutions, or were trained abroad, or come from the ranks of converts. The scholar trained in Catholic schools and colleges who has achieved the first ranks of scholarly distinction while remaining in Catholic higher education is relatively rare.

THE SITUATION is due not only to poor teaching conditions, but, even more significantly, to the absence of any great centers of graduate instruction under Catholic auspices. Great graduate schools beget strong colleges, and they in turn, strong secondary and elementary schools. The strength and quality of an educational system rest upon the quality of the graduate instruction supporting it. The development of a superior system of graduate instruction should receive the highest priority in the deliberations of those who are responsible for Catholic learning in America. An educational system needs good teachers but they do not come into being as a result of spontaneous generation. It requires a long and difficult period of gestation and can be accomplished only under the auspices of great scholars in well-organized centers of learning.

The proliferation of mediocre Catholic graduate schools is due to the decentralization of the teaching orders within the Catholic church—an ironic situation, when one takes into account the common criticism of unfriendly outsiders that the Roman Catholic Church is the most monolithic organization in the United States. Yet after ten years of active teaching and administration in the largest archdiocese in the United States, I have found no evidence of any sort of centralized policy-making or administration at the level of higher education (and surprising little at the lower levels). The principle of decentralization in education has strong and weak points. It seems quite imprudent to permit the deterioration of higher education in order to retain the principle of decentralization in a state of unalloyed purity.

TWO CONSTRUCTIVE proposals can be stated briefly. The first is to accept as an immediate goal the establishment of one superior graduate university as a national institution. Once the choice has been made, let a commission of about twelve of the most competent educators be given the full-time job of making a study of how this university should be reorganized.



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The second proposal concerns the long run situation. A decision should be reached, and gradually implemented, to establish a good graduate university in every area covered by a regional accrediting agency. I do not advocate a contraction of existing university facilities but a reorganization, including the redistribution of faculty, and a strengthening of existing facilities by the strategic marshalling and concentration of resources that are already available.

There are many other considerations, of a detailed and mundane nature, related to the second fundamental right of the professor: proper conditions for teaching and research. These include such things as adequate office space, teaching and research assistants, clerical help, sabbatical years, etc. Lay and religious faculty members should be treated alike in these matters, and both groups need to have their present situations vastly improved.

The third right of the professor is to be adequately paid. Fortunately, teachers are not looking forward to wealth, and Catholic lay professors are among the most self-sacrificing persons in the profession. What would satisfy them? Here are some of my reflections drawn from experience.

The minimum salary for a beginner should be well above five thousand dollars and should include a teaching schedule and such other prudential arrangements as would induce the completion of doctoral dissertations. Professors upon receiving tenure should start with a minimum of seven thousand dollars, with the average being around eighty-five hundred. Superior professors, and those with longer service, should receive between nine and twelve thousand dollars. At this salary, I think it would still be possible to retain men and women who could earn more elsewhere, but who would stay out of dedication—provided the teaching and research arrangements were good.

Each institution should also provide a liberal plan of medical care, including hospitalization, and a well-conceived retirement plan. It should also endeavor to maximize fringe benefits and manifest genuine concern for the temporal situation of the layman. This would inevitably happen once laymen participated in the making of policy.

Of the three rights discussed, equality of opportunity to participate in the deliberative affairs of the college, proper conditions for teaching and research, and adequate monetary compensation, the first is the most essential. In the final analysis, even poor conditions and low salaries are acceptable if the persons affected are themselves responsible for the decisions which brought about such a state of affairs. There would be no one else to blame.

The above analysis and proposed solutions, which are meant to be constructive as well as provocative, are written in a spirit of friendship and loyalty to the many devoted priests, brothers, nuns, and laymen with whom it has been my privilege to serve. We stand to gain more from an open confession of our problems and a thorough examination of alternative solutions, than from following the counsels of polite but timid minds who systematically deny and obscure their problems and consider muddling through the better part of practical wisdom.

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## VICTIMAE PASCHALI LAUDES

"He hath seen my sitting down and rising up . . ."

In the next bed the
priest babbles on;
his mind dumb, his Ephpheta
now crucified and dead—
I have no introit
to vomit up.

"This is the day which the Lord hath made . . ."

The morning belches up
the sun. The sun
must rise; but Son
on Easter morn—
Send some anesthetic for
this brain-piercing pain.

"Lord thou hast proved and known me . . ."

Chasubled in antiseptic
vestments, in Resurrection white
for Requiem. A spoon
dropped in a glass coldly
chimes a gloria—
Glory to God . . . I'd like some
breakfast with my sweat.

"Lord thou hast proved me and known me . . ."

Now transubstantiation of flesh
to clay. A final breath
on host of air. *Ite* shutters up
through ether-incense—
Go make your sacrifice.
Let me be sick.

"Deo gratias . . ."

God, hear his *de Profundis*.
He has given You his Calvary;
Give him now Your Resurrection.

REGINA O'CONNELL.



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# THE BISHOP AND THE BUTCHER

THE CASE of the bishop and the butcher in Italy has disappeared from the front pages but it is still being discussed. The butcher was baptized a Catholic but in the course of time became an atheist. He persuaded his fiancée, a Catholic girl, that they should be married in a civil ceremony. The bishop wrote a letter about the case which was read in the parish church. He said what everyone expected him to say. He stated that in the eyes of the Church these two were living in concubinage. The butcher's business fell off after this public condemnation. He sued the bishop for libel and won.

Reactions to the case were interesting. The decision was hailed by many Americans as a victory for the separation of Church and State in Italy. In Catholic circles, to no one's surprise, it was regarded as a terrible sign of the times. The Church in Italy went out of its way to show its disapproval. The Pope canceled a festive celebration. Churches were draped in mourning flags and funeral bells pealed ominously.

To most Americans, used to the separation of Church and State, such a reaction seemed a bit thick—so *Italianissimo,* as one priest friend of mine said. But, apparently, Catholic authorities in Italy regarded the court's decision as a serious invasion of what we in this country call "freedom of the pulpit." They took a typically Latin way to say so. They reacted as strongly as most of us, in our own way, would react if an American clergyman were punished by law for defining a sin or naming a sinner in his pulpit.

That Italian Communists have been campaigning against church weddings for Catholics was of course one of the elements in the situation as it was seen both here and abroad. Here the Communist aspect was an embarrassment for some who approved of the decision and a great talking-point for those who disapproved.

Now there is no denying the fact that the Communist issue complicated the case. For one thing if the Communist Party had not been stepping up its civil-marriage campaign the bishop might not have gone out of his way to denounce the couple by name. The case might not have had as much political significance as it was given in Italy. But essentially the Communist factor did not make a great deal of difference. What we had here was an interesting problem in Church-State relations; the issue revolved around the meaning of religious liberty in the modern, democratic state.

America, though it is young among nations, has the longest experience in such matters. So we might ask what the decision would be if an American bishop were hauled into one of our courts under the same charge. I can not imagine an American court finding him guilty. I do not believe he would have been fined. His action, however much its prudence might be questioned, would be regarded as a legitimate exercise of religious liberty. If he had instituted a boycott and deliberately incited his people to blacklist the sinner's business, there might be a legal case. But the Italian bishop did no such thing. A boycott resulted from his action; he did not instigate it by preachment or plan.

In this country we put so much emphasis on religious liberty, rank it so high among our values, that the butcher would probably have no legal case against the bishop. It is only fair to say too that we have such a profound respect for individual liberty in religious matters that, in most communities, a condemnation would not have generally affected the butcher's business; it might even have helped it.

Separation of Church and State, even to the degree that it exists there, is still new to Italy. The Italians would do well to examine our tradition. If they did so they would learn that far from denying religious liberty American courts put great emphasis on it and will go to great lengths to protect it. It would take something quite extreme and wholly unreasonable before an American court would find a religious leader guilty of civil crime for anything he said in the pulpit. The courts leave that to public opinion and the sense of fair play of the American people, as well as the good sense and restraint of American clergymen.

This of course is hazardous. But all our liberties are hazardous. The tremendous emphasis placed on free speech and press meant that very little could be done in the legal forum for those who were blacklisted, often for trivial reasons, in the McCarthy era. It means that those who suffer because they are depicted as objects of scorn or portrayed as the "enemy of democracy" in the sectarian press, religious or political, have rarely if ever any legal recourse. It means that publicists are free to injure the public careers of Catholics by denouncing the Church's doctrines for being "undemocratic." It means that any cleric who has a mind to can say the most outrageous things about prominent movie actors or politicians in the limelight and that a university chaplain can publicly cast doubt on the intellectual integrity of a whole faculty with impunity. In the interests of the greater liberty, individuals have suffered and will undoubtedly continue to suffer without the State's assuring them of justice.

It was rather a shock, then, to find so many American believers in civil liberties ignoring this point in their comments on the Italian case.

JOHN COGLEY.



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*Once rejected, his work is today very much a part of Catholic art*

# The Death of Rouault

by FRANK and DOROTHY GETLEIN

GEORGES ROUAULT died a week before Ash Wednesday and the beginning of the season that seems to be his time in the year. The circumstances of his birth, too, had a strange appropriateness to his work.

Rouault was born in Belleville, a working-class suburb of Paris, on May 27, 1871, during the brief period of the Communard revolt. The troops from Versailles shelled the city, and Rouault's mother, after their house was struck, took refuge in a cellar. And here it was, in a cellar, that the painter was born.

The Commune, of course, was put down. The bourgeois Third Republic was solidly established and ruled France for seventy years of the artist's life.

All of these images turn up again and again in Rouault's paintings and prints. Among the titles he gave to his great print series, the *Miserere,* occur these: "In the old district of Long-Suffering"; "War, hated by mothers"; "We must die, we and all that is ours"; "My sweet country, what has become of you?"; "Man is as wolf to man"; "Even the ruins they have destroyed."

There were other influences, persons, works of art, philosophies, chance encounters. As a boy Rouault was introduced to the work of Daumier by his grandfather, who urged him to become an artist. Then, taken from school at fourteen, he was apprenticed to a stained glass maker named Hirsch, whose major concern was the restoration of medieval glass. Rouault continued Daumier's tradition of passionate social criticism, but he penetrated as far beneath Daumier's perceptions as Daumier himself had penetrated beneath the glittering surface of the Second Republic and the Second Empire. And the influence of stained glass on Rouault's work has also been much argued. The thick black lines, and the pure colors, lighted from within, make the analogy easy if not inevitable; there are occasional resemblances of feeling, too, but by and large the differences here are greater than the similarities. For one thing, Daumier and his whole tradition of social criticism had come into existence between the time of the stained glass maker and the time of Rouault. If a link must be found with the middle ages, it would be better sought in the incidental sculpture of the cathedrals, the gargoyles, the Last Judgments over the doors, the wood carving in choir stalls.

At twenty Rouault entered the École des Beaux Arts, where Gustave Moreau became his "beloved master" and friend for seven years. When Moreau died in 1898, leaving his house and a large collection to the city of Paris, Rouault became curator of the Gustave Moreau Museum, and for years the annual stipend of some four hundred dollars was the core of his income. It is hard for us today to see much of Moreau's influence. The brightness of his colors has been mentioned, but Rouault's lower depths seem a far cry from his teacher's serene renderings of Greek mythology. And Rouault himself, in homage to his teacher, paid tribute to the older man's insistence that his students free themselves from his influence. Yet Moreau was working to find new life in the ancient, worn-out myths. A few years later Rouault was to see and find blazing life in a mythos then accounted just as dead to art as those of the Greeks. Rouault's was Christianity.

MOREAU'S strongest influence was undoubtedly as an inspiration and example of the integrity demanded in the high calling of artist. This may be seen throughout Rouault's career, from his indignant protest to a priest who advised him to "paint something that will sell easily," to that incredible scene at the beginning of his last decade. In a precedent-establishing lawsuit, Rouault had gained possession of about one thousand paintings from the heirs of his dealer, Ambroise Vollard. And in the presence of an official witness the artist burned three hundred and fifteen of them as not satisfactory. A fair value at the time would have been somewhere around a million dollars.

When he helped to found the Salon d'Automne of 1904, Rouault again acted as a professional concerned for his profession. He had, himself, been admitted to the official Salon from 1895 on, but the Salon d'Automne revealed in full brilliance the achievements of Cézanne and the other Post-Impressionists and it provided a place of exhibition for the new artists who were neither academic nor Impressionists.

Mr. Getlein is art critic for the Milwaukee *Journal*. Mrs. Getlein has written for various magazines, including *The Grail* and *Jubilee*.



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In the second Salon d'Automne, in 1905, there occurred the famous revolt of the Fauves or "wild beasts," among them Matisse, Derain, Vlaminck and Rouault. But Rouault's association with the others is really more an accident of installation than anything else. For all that the Fauves were in revolt, and had to be in revolt, essentially they were in the main stream of French elegance in art, a tradition more than two centuries old, and a tradition with which Rouault had nothing to do, then or at any time in his long career.

The shock value of Rouault's painting was different from that of the other Fauves. His paintings were nudes, and nudes such as Paris had never seen or wanted to see. Rouault took the dream image of the Academy's erotic fantasies, so loved by the high bourgeois for their combination of sex and the classical allusion, but he presented his nudes as the horrifying inhabitants of the Parisian *maisons*. In his monumental study of the nude in art, Sir Kenneth Clark places these paintings as the climax of what he calls "the alternative convention." They are, says Clark, "the last violent twist in the history of the nude. . . . The sublimation of desire is replaced by shame at its very existence. . . yet Rouault convinces us that this hideous image is necessary. . . . Rembrandt's approach was moral, Rouault's is religious. . . . Her hideous body is ideal because conceived in a spirit of awe."

THE work of Rouault is so much a part of Catholic art today that it is easy to forget he was a convert in middle life. His father was a follower of Lamennais in what Philip Hughes has called a "premature attempt to reconcile Catholicism and the Revolution." And one of the enduring glories of his son's achievement is the profound insight that the Revolution is, in its thirst for justice, in its compassion for the exploited of the earth, a new incarnation of the spirit of Catholicism.

Rouault's Catholicism was profoundly influenced by three people, Jacques and Raissa Maritain and Léon Bloy. Mme. Maritain has written, in *We Have Been Friends Together,* a warm and penetrating account of Rouault as a person. And Maritain's *Art and Scholasticism* is said to have been written with Rouault in mind. But the Bloy relationship is a strange one. Even today, those who are suddenly exposed to the violence, misery, degradation and sanctity of *The Woman Who Was Poor* sense at once a connection with Rouault. But the artist, for whom Bloy's novel was a lightning flash, vigorously denied that his paintings are, in any sense, "illustrations for Bloy." And Bloy, for his part, was outraged at Rouault's painting: "If you were a man of prayer, a man of obedience, you couldn't paint those horrible pictures."

These things were happening in the first five years of this century. And at the same time, in 1903, when Rouault was thirty-two, something else happened. Rouault wrote in a letter: "One day I noticed how, when a beautiful day turns to evening, the first star shines out in the sky. It moved me deeply—I don't know why—and it marked the beginnings of poetry in my life. A gypsy caravan halted at the side of the road, a weary old horse nibbling stunted grasses, an old clown patching his costume. . . . That was how it began. . . . We all wear a spangled dress of some sort, but if someone catches us with the spangles off, as I caught that old clown, oh! the infinite pity of it! . . . I have made the mistake, if, indeed it is a mistake . . . of never allowing people to keep their spangles on."

## Georges Rouault, 1871–1958

ROUAULT had so great a place in our life that the shock of his death is difficult for me to bear. I remember our long friendship, his heroic perseverance at the time when everybody disregarded his work and treated him like a madman, the stories he eagerly and angrily told, his wonderful talks about his art and his experiences. He was a living inspiration for me when I wrote *Art and Scholasticism.* He has always remained in our minds the model of the absolute integrity, hardworking patience, and unswerving faithfulness to one's "inner vision" and "inner promptings" which are the prime requirements of art. He also bore witness to the fact that a scrupulous moral rectitude—the deep-rooted moral rectitude of a religious-minded, solitary, meditative Breton craftsman—may be one with genius and complete dedication to art. In him the most exacting technique in the use of pictorial matter served to express the intense perceptiveness of a mind haunted by pity. In the bitter and dark epoch of his judges, prostitutes, and self-complacent *bourgeoises,* when he painted the monstrosity and misery of sin, in his clowns and all his pictures of human forlornness, his loving understanding of the poor and the forsaken was visible. He was already longing for the peace and internal harmony of that religious art in which he became the greatest master of our times. In his *Miserere* and his poignant Crucifixions everything points to the mercy of Christ. The sense of this mercy is the secret of the moving serenity of his last years.

JACQUES MARITAIN.



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IT WAS in 1917 that Rouault contracted to deliver his total output to Ambroise Vollard, dealer and publisher. Vollard paid Rouault 49,150 francs for seven hundred and seventy paintings in various degrees of completion, Rouault to finish and sign them as he could. The painter had married in 1908 and there were four children to support. But although the appallingly low price must have seemed heaven-sent to the Rouaults at the time, something beyond the need for daily bread must have kept Rouault tied to Vollard until the dealer's death in 1939. It is not too difficult to see what.

Vollard was much more than a sharp trader. He was a creative man, a writer and a publisher of beautiful books. Beyond that he had the peculiar genius of the impressario, the almost clairvoyant power not simply to recognize genius in others but to see future possibilities and to guide the genius in their direction. The direction, above all, that Vollard discerned in Rouault's work was the *Miserere*. This series of fifty-eight prints lies across more than thirty years of Rouault's maturity, an intolerable and unending burden, a daily struggle with the strong acids and sharp tools of his craft, a frustration and despair when for years it seemed the work would never be published. Then came the vindication in a French court of an artist's rights in his own work, and finally the monumental achievement, taking its place with the great print series over the centuries.

Color is one of Rouault's great distinctions as a painter—the color of sun, the color of sky, the color of flame, surrounded by the thick black lines as if produced like jewels in the pressure of the earth. Richly textured, color comes through color until color takes on form and even meaning in itself. But Rouault dispenses with all this in the *Miserere*. By a miracle of patient labor and audacious combinations of techniques, including some which he invented, Rouault was able to translate his language of color into an unprecedented range of gradations and textures in black and white.

The *Miserere's* forty-eight plates comprise a single work of art, with endless interrelations of form, of composition, of feelings and perceptions. In them Rouault tells us that the Passion of Christ endures to the end of time. The events of life in France during World War I become the events of life, and all take place "under a Jesus, forgotten on the Cross."

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*His life testifies to the sanctifying mission of Christian intelligence and of Christian activity*

# Chardin and Human Knowledge

by JUSTUS GEORGE LAWLER

THE ONLY place Thomas à Kempis quotes Aristotle is at the beginning of *The Imitation of Christ,* where one may read: "All men naturally desire to know." Then, like many pious writers citing a pagan philosopher, the author of *The Imitation* proceeds to undercut much of the statement's obvious implication by adding: "But what does knowledge profit without humility?" This is certainly a justifiable question, expressing a justifiable point of view; but it is a question to which à Kempis himself did not know the complete answer, for he testifies that such knowledge profits not at all. One could suggest, with all due reverence for the author of the most popular spiritual treatise in the history of Christianity, that among other things such knowledge might teach its possessor that very humility he needs. "All good things came to me with wisdom," says the learned man of the *Old Testament.*

Contemporary apologists for *The Imitation,* who envisage Christian perfection as the reduction of mankind to a state approximating that of a universal Breton peasantry, are less justified in asserting this viewpoint than was à Kempis, living as he was in an age of reaction to decadent Scholasticism. For there is being developed in our time a strong basis for the defense of the Christian intellectual life. And on this basis one can declare that the pursuit of humanistic or scientific research for the Catholic is not a kind of inferior good

Mr. Lawler is now at the Sorbonne as a University of Chicago Exchange Fellow.

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to which he devotes himself either because he is incapable of carrying out the Gospel injunction, "Pray always," or because he wants to use his knowledge—as is barbarously said—to "make converts."

In the broadening of this basis, which recognizes the Christian intellectual life as a good in itself, a dominant role will be played by the central thesis of Dietrich von Hildebrand's *Transformation in Christ*: "It is not from what we undertake with a view to our transformation, but from the things to which we devote ourselves for their own sake, that will issue the deepest formative effect upon our whole being."

Dietrich von Hildebrand's work is known and justly appreciated in America, and I mention it here simply as one of the evidences of the more balanced vision of the Christian intellectual life which has come into being during the past few decades. Other evidence, and that with which I am directly concerned now, is to be found in the religious writings of the late Père Teilhard de Chardin. Such evidence seems to me all the more important because this great Jesuit scholar testified by his life, in which one sees blended a scientic acumen of the first rank and a religious fidelity approaching the heroic, to the sanctifying mission of Christian intelligence and of Christian activity.

Now the justification of the intellectual life may seem a rather superfluous task in the light of nearly two millenia of Christian thought, and so it seems to many students who after cursory examination find it easy to dismiss as reactionary many spiritual writers, like à Kempis, or writers like John Eudes, de La Salle, de Montfort, Olier, Lallement, and Grou, as being particularly influenced by Jansenist pessimism. But when one realizes that a large body of religious work dismisses the intellectual life as a frightful danger and that, even today, most "manuals of perfection" persist in a blatant negativism concerning the Christian's relation to the world, it becomes apparent that such a justification is doubly important. (I would add parenthetically that if one is seeking the dominant reason for the deficiencies in American Catholic education, he would do well to examine the anti-intellectual orientation of the spirituality of many religious communities, rather than concern himself with any technical flaws in the structure of Catholic schools.)

IN ORDER to illustrate the brilliance of Teilhard de Chardin's defense of the intellectual life or, as he called it on its broader plane, "the divinization of activity," I would like to pose a question. If inevitably the world were to be destroyed within a definite period of a few years, and if this were universally known, what ought to be the attitude or response of the Christian scholar? I would put the question in the framework of such a novel as *On the Beach*, or such earlier exercises in eschatology as Benson's *Lord of the World*



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or Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn's *Moscow 1979,* because in such a framework one can fully illustrate the need for some ontological radication of the Christian intellectual life; one can root it not merely in one's purity of intention, or in the requirements of the apostolate, or in the need for satisfying the sullying demands imposed by one's bodily state, but in the essential structure of God's universe. Given circumstances such as I suggested, should the Christian scholar follow the example of many of his antecedents in the dark ages who, at the approach of the millenium, fled from their "worldly pursuits" and took refuge in the contemplative life of the monasteries?

Teilhard de Chardin would have answered this question by asserting that far from abandoning their scientific or humanistic research, these Christian scholars should intensify their labors, and press forward with all the more enthusiasm; for it is by these very labors that the incarnational mission of Christ is brought to perfection. And in the moment of this perfection, when through the action of Christ's members—whether they be scientist, poet, or manual worker—each of whom by his labor conquers a portion of reality for Christ, when Christ shall be "all in all" through this labor, when all shall be re-capitulated in Christ, then the world as we know it will be brought to an end; time will be brought to its termination, for the Immortal King of ages, through the instrumentality of his creatures, who are His subjects and His members, will have triumphed over it.

Certainly this is an extraordinary vision, which it is impossible to summarize adequately, though an explanation of its genesis and development may help to clarify its deeper meanings.

For Teilhard de Chardin it was a harrowing realization that many Christians justified the pursuit of human knowledge as a valuable technique in the apostolate, or as a necessary concession to that natural impiety which often binds our days each to each. He himself wrote in *Le Coeur de la Matière* that as a Junior at the Jesuit novitiate on the Isle of Jersey, "I had seriously considered the possibility of a total renunciation of the study of fossils in order to consecrate myself entirely to so-called 'supernatural' works. And if I was not 'derailed' at that time it was because of the robust good sense of Father T. who told me that the God of the Cross expected the 'natural' development of my being as well as its sanctification; but he didn't tell me how or why."

It would take Teilhard de Chardin the next fifty years to explain to himself the *how* and the *why* of this advice of his director; and during this period, in the midst of anthropological discoveries of the greatest importance, these two questions would obsess him. In 1927, two years before the finding of the Sinanthropus —the Peking Man—he wrote in China, *Le Milieu*



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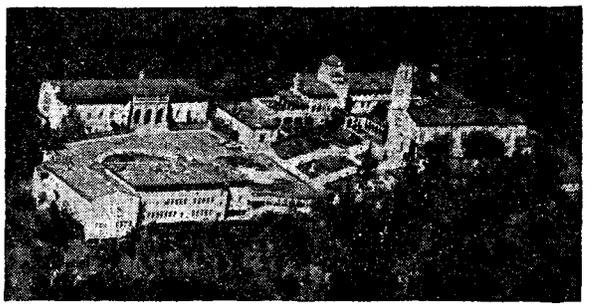

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*Divin,* his most important exclusively religious work, and the work which resolves this problem in a manner unquestionably orthodox and traditional. Later works, and particularly *Le Phénomène Humain,* are attempts to treat on a broader scale, indeed on a cosmic scale, this same issue; but because these works are concerned with the explication of this problem under its more scientific aspects, and from a viewpoint which can only be called—with no pejorative intent—visionary, they are not immediately relevant here.

MOST ATTEMPTS to clarify the place of the intellectual life for the Christian have been centered on two notions: the one which assumes with Père Lallement that "next to sin and the passions nothing is so injurious to the soul as eagerness in study"; and the other—discussed by Garrigou-Lagrange, among others, in considerations of "imperfections for religious" —which sees as imperfections ". . . . certain ways of amusing oneself or of taking pleasure in scientific or artistic things; in study and activity that has been branded as 'natural' because it is not sufficiently supernaturalized by the motive prompting it." Teilhard de Chardin suggests that while this generally accepted and acceptable attitude expresses "a great part of the truth," it almost always leads the Christian who accepts it as the only rationale to regard the world as tainted, and his work in it as essentially valueless. And, as a consequence, Teilhard de Chardin points out, the non-Christian thinker tends to regard his Christian colleagues as only half-committed to their work, or as insincere in their pursuit of "worldly" learning.

After emphasizing the importance of a right intention Teilhard de Chardin adds: "The divinization of our effort by the purity of intention we bring to it, informs all our actions with a precious 'soul'; *but it does not give their 'body' any hope of a resurrection.* Now it is this hope which we need if our joy is to be fulfilled. It is a great deal to be able to think that if we love God, something shall survive of our interior activity, of our *operatio.* But the very labor of our intelligence, of our hearts and of our hands—our results, our works, our *opus*—shall not it also in some way be 'saved' and 'eternalized'?"

He develops his argument justifying such hope on two assumptions which are rooted in the theology of St. Paul and in Christian experience. First, he observes that the effect of man on his environment is to dominate that environment. As a result, when the Christian exercises his faculties on the world about him, in virtue of his mystical union with his Head, Christ, such an exercise is a projection and a continuation of the sanctifying work of the Incarnation. "By our collaboration, which He engenders, Christ consummates Himself, attains His fullness. . . ."

Again, in a letter to his close friend the distinguished



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Jesuit humanist, Père Auguste Valensin, he wrote that a great part of the Christian effort consists "in collaborating passionately in the human Effort, with the realization that, not only by fidelity in obedience, but by the *work* realized, we labor to bring about the Pleroma by preparing its more or less proximate matter." And furthermore, as a corollary to this, Teilhard de Chardin notes that the Christian, by his devotion to the purest truth, by his resignation to the difficulties in whatever work he pursues, by his contending with the refractory forces of the world, undergoes a continual mortification, which in conjunction with one's personal ascetic exercises helps to make up "that which is lacking to the passion of Christ."

If in the first of these principles one recognizes not only Pauline themes—for the Divine Milieu is simply the omnipresence of God "in whom we live, move, and have our being"—but also certain emphases on the Parousia and the inseminating Word that recall Maximus the Confessor and Methodus of Olympus, then in the second principle one may recognize St. Thomas' teaching that the truth we acquire in this life will perdure in the next, and be a cause of accidentally intensifying our happiness in the Beatific Vision.

This principle affirms that even as the Christian acts upon the world, so too the world acts upon the Christian. And in this action, the Christian man, the Christian microcosm, who has absorbed into his being both subconscious racial and instinctual influences, as well as innumerable personal experiences, by the very fact of receiving them into himself spiritualizes them; and as they are received into a Christian, into one of the elect, they are thereby destined to be sanctified and "saved." "In each soul God loves and saves partially the entire world which this soul résumés in a particular and incommunicable manner. Now this résumé, this synthesis, is not given to us ready-made, complete, with the first awakening of consciousness. It comes to us by our activity in industriously gathering together its elements which are scattered about everywhere." It is the duty, then, of the Christian to enrich his experiences, not out of any motives of personal aggrandizement, but because these experiences are thus sanctified for Christ, and because, like life itself, they will be changed, not taken away.

IN DISCUSSING one aspect of Teilhard de Chardin's work, the divinization of human activity, I have had necessarily to bypass other themes of great value and of great beauty in *Le Milieu Divin;* and I have had to ignore completely both his religio-scientific essays and his great synthesis in *Le Phénomène Humain.* Such limitation has been imposed upon this subject because the defense of the Christian intellectual life seems very pertinent to present concerns over American Catholic education, and also because *Le*


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*Milieu Divin,* as a spiritual treatise, is capable of standing alone. Moreover, in consideration of the real unity which exists within his works, I think it a great error on the part of those who read this treatise in the light of the later publications.

A number of criticisms have been made of *Le Milieu Divin.* Generally, however, the book is criticized for failing to define what it was never intended to define, or for failing to include illustrations from the classical *loci theologici.* The latter criticism is valid, but again, considering the purpose of the work and the circumstances in which it was written, it is for future students of Teilhard de Chardin's thought to point out how traditional its teaching is. One criticism which has been raised and which bears on the question discussed above must, however, be examined here. Louis Cognet, in *Père Teilhard de Chardin et la Pensée Contemporaine,* criticizes the priest-scientist, in his attempt to "relate the problem of the salvation of the world to its spiritualization of human effort," for "totally omitting to indicate at the interior of this concept how this work and this effort are able to have a completely different value for the Christian than for the non-Christian."

Abbé Cognet had not the benefit of the two volumes of Teilhard de Chardin's correspondence, recently published, which indicate how vital a role the doctrine of the Mystical Body played in the life of the great Jesuit; but he did have *Le Milieu Divin* where this doctrine is seen as underlying the entire conception of the divinization of human activity: "Without doubt, in order to avoid the materialist or pantheist perversion which harasses our thought when it seeks to employ for its mystical conceptions the powerful, but dangerous, resources of organic analogies, many theologians (more hesitant in this than St. Paul) do not want to give too realistic a meaning to the bonds which unite the members to the Head in the Mystical Body. But this prudence ought not to become timidity. . . . It is necessary, without rejecting the forces of liberty and of consciousness, which constitute the 'physical' reality of the human soul, that we should recognize between us and the Word Incarnate the existence of ties as strong as those which, in the world of nature, direct those affinities of the elements towards the compounding of natural 'Wholes.'" What makes this statement all the more noteworthy, and witnesses to the profound *sentire cum ecclesia* of Teilhard de Chardin, is that it was written before Anger, before Mersch, before Jürgensmeier had popularized a renewed interest in the Mystical Body.

One other criticism which has been made is that the language of Teilhard de Chardin is often so untraditional as to obscure his meaning. Yet one can see in what he himself called "my jargon" an attempt to escape from the clichés of religious thought, and to ex-



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amine old themes in a fresh way. One can imagine a professor at the University of Paris in the thirteenth century reading the *De Ente et Essentia* and raising similar complaints about neologisms—and one might even imagine such a professor paying so backhanded a compliment as: "This young author is completely wrong, but nothing can diminish his merits as an initiator."

The sketching of parallels is one of the favorite entertainments of historians and, notwithstanding Acton's remark to Mary Gladstone that "a disposition to detect resemblances is one of the greatest sources of error," it is a game that will continue to be played. Teilhard de Chardin has been compared by his critics to Origen, and by his admirers to Scotus and St. Thomas. I would prefer comparing him to the one writer in French religious history who seemed to be able to grasp fully the point of view both of the Christian and of the man of the world: Pascal, in his dialogues between himself and the libertine, in the work that has come down to us as *Pensées*.

And while no Jesuit would like being compared to the author of the *Provinciales*, yet I believe that these two Christian thinkers, the Jansenist and the Jesuit, as few others in modern times, have recognized the awesome problems of man finding himself in a new and mysterious universe. The parallel, however, falters since the silence of these infinite spaces which so frightened Pascal is recognized by Teilhard de Chardin as the silence from which, as Ignatius Martyr said, "The Word has come forth." And it is from the contemplation of this Word that the vision of Teilhard de Chardin, with its broad scope, its poetic insights, its profound Christocentric bearing, and its incidental obscurities, has come.

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planter who falls in love with the Navy nurse and sings very well when the voice of Metropolitan Opera's Giorgio Tozzi is dubbed in.

The music, the stirring, hauntingly lovely Rodgers songs and the Hammerstein lyrics, comes across well. And the photography, most of it done in Hawaii, is handsomely displayed in Technicolor and the large-screen Todd-AO process. And there is the lovely score and the pleasant doings on these islands in the South Pacific during World War II, especially the two romances between the nurse from Little Rock and the French planter and between the Marine lieutenant and the Tonkinese girl.

But the faults and weaknesses of the original show are magnified on the realistic large screen, and Paul Osborn's script seems rather flat with its fretting about Nellie Forbush's objections to Planter Emile DeBecque because he was once married to a Polynesian woman who bore him two children. And, unfortunately, the other romance, involving the Marine lieutenant (made monotonously dull by John Kerr) and the Tonkinese girl (made incredibly lovely by France Nuyen) has a tone of vulgarity about it, set by Juanita Hall as Bloody Mary, the girl's ruthlessly scheming mother. Both romances, which make some effort to deal with miscegenation, duck the final issues. Nellie accepts the French planter because he becomes a hero on a dangerous war mission, the same mission that kills off the lieutenant and thus ends any more talk of his marrying Bloody Mary's daughter.

The film's music bathes these romances with a glow that shines most brightly when the planter sings "Some Enchanted Evening" and later when the lieutenant sings "Younger Than Springtime." For some inexplicable reasons, the film also uses a visual glow, bathing the singers every now and then in a mist of artificial colors that are meant to set the mood: blue, purple, green, yellow, gold, etc. This device works pretty well with a number like "Bali Ha'i" but is overworked when illuminating the other songs and is sometimes downright annoying.

Buddy Adler gave "South Pacific" an elaborate production, too elaborate at times, and Joshua Logan was inconsistent in his direction, which varied from the realistic to the sentimental to the imaginative to the theatrically phoney (lots of the latter in the scenes of the too-handsome, too-muscular Seabees at play and at work). But in spite of its faults, "South Pacific" remains an entertaining film. One can enjoy Ray Walston as the Seabee with a multitude of enterprises, Nellie and DeBecque as they dally with romance, the beautifully-photographed scenery and, above all, the music, which sends one out of the theater singing.

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# The Reality of the Catholic Press

REALITIES. Edited by Dan Herr and Clem Lane. Bruce. $3.95.

By ROBERT D. CROSS

THIS SELECTION of twenty-five recent articles by as many authors certainly testifies—if testimony is needed—to the variety and vigor of "significant writing" in the Catholic Press. Essays by such distinguished authors as John Courtney Murray, S. J., Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn, Archbishop Karl J. Alter, and John La Farge, S. J.—not to mention familiar Commonweal figures such as George Shuster, John Cogley, and William Clancy—help guarantee the reader many stimulating moments. In addition, the collection may serve as a useful introduction to many authors and periodicals as yet less well known to the general public.

I must admit that after finishing the last page I entertain doubts about the collection *as a book*. Commencement addresses and syndicated columns, addresses to the world and to specially qualified groups, ruminative essays and personal anecdotes follow each other in no pattern or sequence that I can make out. Furthermore, much of the relevance of periodical writing stems from the context in which it appears, including the general commitment of editors and other contributors, the reaction of readers, and the background and subsequent efforts of the authors themselves. In this collection, the penumbra shed by a particular magazine is, perhaps necessarily, simply taken for granted, and though brief notes are appended to introduce the writers, most of the information is selected by the criteria of skilled journalism rather than of intellectual history. Of Thomas Murray we learn, among other things, that the I.R.T., of which he was federal receiver for a time, was worth $500,000,000; that twenty-five per cent of World War II mortar shells were made by the Murray method; and that he has 33 grandchildren. Surely his moving address reprinted here on the implications of atomic energy would have been more usefully footnoted by an account of his valiant efforts to enlighten the outlook of the A.E.C.

More tendentious than the buckshot quality of the book is the principle of selectivity guiding the editors in their avowed effort "to bring home to the average man that religion," far from being isolated from life in its everyday aspects, is, in Christopher Dawson's words, "concerned with realities, that it is in fact the pathway to reality and the law of life." They apparently do not feel enjoined by this mission to include writings dedicated to the sacramental or eschatological,

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though I would suppose these concern the central realities, and the many writings on them one of the notable superiorities of the Catholic press over secular and, by a lesser margin, Protestant journalism. One is grateful that at some cost to consistency the editors included Bishop John J. Wright's thoughtful essay on "The Mass and International Order," despite its emphasis on sacramental mystery.

Most of the essays tackle, from one angle or another, the relationship between Catholics, whose formally religious life is assumed, and those areas of life—economic, political, even cultural—which in common parlance are "real." Almost all the contributors criticize those Catholics who seem indifferent to such concerns. Most of them are equally critical of "integralists" who wish the Church to scout the integrity of any such concerns. The repetition of these themes throughout the collection unfortunately tends to detract from the personal insight and courage each article originally required. Worse, it invites attention to the necessarily foreshortened nature of the separate expositions. The reader may feel as if he has been listening to a very long convention in which a succession of speakers have found it easier to talk about the enemy than to spell out their own policy.

This reaction is, of course, most unfair to the individual authors, but it may well have been partly the reason that I especially appreciated several articles which turned from the politics of Christianizing the world: notably George Shuster's lyric to the idiosyncrasy of poetry; a magistral piece by John Courtney Murray, which closes with the reminder that literary creation is more to be cherished than literary censorship, or for that matter than criticism of excessive censorship; Eugene McCarthy's discriminating observations on the obligations of the Christian in politics; and the straightforward moral passion of an article by Martin Gleason, a senior at Loyola University, Chicago, condemning policy toward Japanese-Americans during World War II.

Inevitably contributors differ widely in their ability to approve, or at least sympathize with, other people's aspirations and premises. If Gordon Zahn is willing to go far more than the recommended second mile to find some Catholic misdeeds to explain, in part, the blind virulence of Blanshardites, Father John B. Sheerin, C.S.P., in attacking unrestrained claims to "academic freedom," does not stop to acknowledge, if only to refute, the basic premise of this argument. And if Father E. M. Catich, in his penetrating discussion of "The Image of Christ in Art," does scrupulous justice to the technical goals of secular painters of the Renaissance and later, Father Francis P. Canavan, S. J. weakens his attempt to show the dark consequences of birth control logic by a monistic teleology that probably very few of the audience he seeks to convince will accept.

Other contributors, Father La Farge, Bishop Vincent S. Waters of North Carolina, and Mrs. Helen

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Caldwell Riley, though writing very different kinds of articles, are all subtle in their perceptions both of the injuries done to Negroes, and of the psychological tricks by which the rest of us, inside and outside of the Church, persuade ourselves to pass by.

In sum, despite the reservations, the rewarding collection in *Realities* mirrors one of the most admirable and most admired aspects of contemporary Catholic witness.

---

## Clear, Firm Work

THE RETURN OF ANSEL GIBBS. By Frederick Buechner. Knopf. $3.75.

By EDWIN KENNEBECK

AT THE age of thirty-two, Frederick Buechner is a long way from those members of his generation who call themselves "beat" (and who have their own lively virtues); unlike them, he is preoccupied with the problems of moral responsibility and with the conscious use of the techniques of his craft. His third novel is a study of several decisions made within a few days by Ansel Gibbs, a man who has just been offered an unspecified Cabinet post. Pretty well on in years, Gibbs has a public reputation as a complex, intelligent man, "urbane, detached, and moneyed," and Buechner's very interesting, perhaps over-subtle attempt is evidently to show how the springs of Gibbs' decisions flow and function, how underneath the perplexing movements of the mind of a "rational man" the deep currents of emotion and intuition may carry him to his real destiny.

Like many characters in the novels of Mr. Buechner, Ansel Gibbs seems to inhabit a world in which decision and susceptibility are constantly at war. That his daughter very obviously functions in such a world is shown in a scene where she wanders, with many thoughts in her head, into a florist shop. "Almost before she had become fully aware of where she was a clerk . . . asked what she wanted,


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to which 'Roses,' she found herself answering." She then continues on her way, trying to choose between going to visit her lover, named Tripp, and flying to Washington to try to persuade her father to accept the Cabinet appointment. "Stepping out into the street again, [she] found that in some fashion she had already made her decision: to send yellow roses to her father, to go herself to Tripp. . . ."

But when she arrives at Tripp's apartment, this lady of ad-lib decisions finds that she has chosen another course—she must leave her lover and go to her father. "She told him of her new decision as if it had been in her mind from the beginning."

The processes through which the future statesman's soul move are similar to those of his daughter. As the novel opens he has apparently quite made up his mind to accept the post, after two years of retirement; he has also, incidentally, resolved not to make any public statement until after the appointment has been confirmed. He soon realizes that his appointment has already had its effect on his daughter, on his old law-firm associate, and on his daughter's lover, a successful and influential young television star who wants Gibbs to appear in an interview on his program. This young man also happens to be the son of a former employee of Gibbs, who had committed suicide several years earlier.

Having, supposedly, a complex mind, Gibbs sees so many sides to every question that he is less likely to make decisions than to let them well up in his heart, to "find" that he *has* made them. He consents to a premature appearance on the television show in a surge of relief when he sees that the young star does not hold him accountable for his father's suicide. After the show, in an emotional turmoil over its outcome—for he has spoken, he thinks, too frankly and personally —he decides to refuse the presidential appointment. He is able to formulate a reason for this: "It's one thing to fall short of greatness . . . but to fall short of common humanity is something else again.

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. . . What else can it mean to have a friend and not to save him, to have a daughter and not to know her, to meet a friend's son and not to trust him . . . ? This is no man to govern men." But whether these are only rationalizations to cover his realization that he has alienated public opinion and must decline the appointment before it can be withdrawn, or whether they have become genuine motivations, is a problem not clarified, perhaps not meant to be clarified. The problem is a manifestation of the enigmatic soul of Gibbs himself. Or is it?

Gibbs makes up his mind finally (finally, at any rate, in the sense that the novel ends before he changes his mind again) after a small accident in which the television star, the victim of Gibb's wrath, tumbles over a coffee table and hurts himself. The point presumably is that his pain draws from Gibbs first a gesture of humility and sympathy, a realization that he, Gibbs, does not "fall short of common humanity," and then another decision.

We are left contemplating a man of national importance whose life, within the time of the story, has been shaped by the most immediate and elementary feelings. It is a remarkable portrait, but the final effect is so ambiguous that I am hard put to it to discover whether the novel means to include in the depiction an evaluation. Is so intuitive, emotional, and susceptible a person the proper (or likely) man to bring into the United States Cabinet? Why not?—aren't the sincerest, truest decisions made by the unreasoning heart? Or why?—aren't the most solid and trustworthy national policies made by those with clear heads, who are not swayed by their feelings?

Buechner's style, as others have remarked of his earlier books, is often noticeably "Jamesian." Sometimes it echoes James's arch manipulations of phrases and attitudes, sometimes his comma-laden, packed attempts at precision. Occasionally it is over-wrought: "He found himself looking forward to no matter what Tripp was to say or do, gripped by the mere potentiality of


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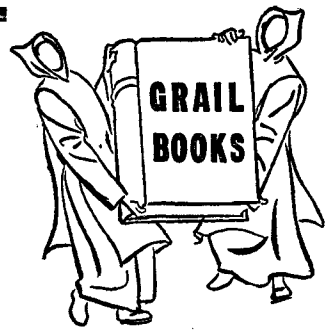


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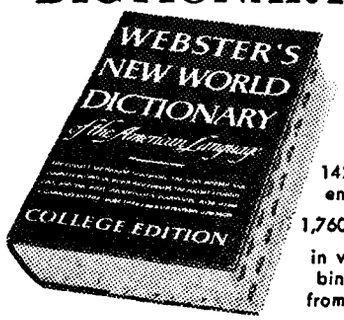


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reaction because what the boy's expression lacked in the kind of intensity from which some authentic response might spring, it more than made up for simply by its vitality." (It might be interesting to count the number of times someone "finds himself" thinking or doing something in this novel.)

But much of the writing has grace and elegance. Buechner creates genuinely beautiful moments —a snowfall, a quiet dinner party, an instant of personal loneliness and bafflement—and at his best he indicates the pulse and flavor of a mood or state of mind down to the wispiest velleity. In this novel there is less of the seemingly deliberate attempt to create bizarre situations than in *A Long Day's Dying* (in which a monkey, imitating the mock gestures of its owners, cuts its own throat) or *The Seasons' Difference* (in which some children stage a fake "vision" before a man who is expecting the recurrence of a real one). Despite faults in both conception and execution, the maturity of tone and the skill with which it is constructed make *The Return of Ansel Gibbs* the firmest and clearest of his works.

## Man of Letters

THE HIRELING. By L. P. Hartley. Rinehart. $3.50.

By GEOFFREY WAGNER

IN 1947 W. Y. Tindall's comprehensive *Forces in Modern British Literature* contained no reference to L. P. Hartley; reissued a decade later, the same survey considers him as a serious contemporary. And it is true that, in common with British novelists of this generation like C. P. Snow and R. C. Hutchinson, Hartley has recently advanced his reputation to a point where one is forced to take stock of his performance. He rates full-page reviews in the *Times Literary Supplement* and Lord David Cecil thinks him "the first of living novelists in some respects."

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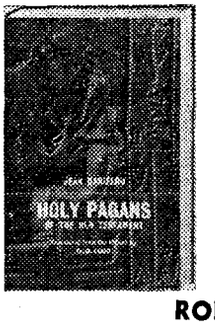


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Hartley started with a novel that is best forgotten, but in 1944 *The Shrimp and the Anemone,* published here as *The West Window* and dedicated to Sir Osbert Sitwell, proved the first and best of his Eustace-Hilda novels, concerning a rather charming middle-class boy and his predatory elder sister. Here the background of Edwardian seaside resort blended admirably with the depiction of introverted English boyhood, and Hartley was tempted to return to both theme and era in 1953 with *The Go-Between,* whose Marcus Maudsley stands in for the rich boy Dick Staveley of the earlier volume.

In these novels Hartley has tried to explore the special nature of inhibited English boyhood, particularly the paralysis of the will that afflicts the sensitive child on the discovery that the emotional liberation of puberty (symbolized in *The West Window* by a paperchase) includes its ration of revolt against a dominant societal complex. Unfortunately, Hartley's sense of this evil contains esthetic repressions of its own and his characters tend to turn into postulates. In *The Perfect Woman,* and now *The Hireling,* he has tried to edge out of this difficulty by turning to the adult world and increasing his symbolic hold on the narrative. In *The Hireling* this secondary pattern turns out to be Chaucerian—a chauffeur drives a Lady Franklin down to Canterbury and hears a Tale. There are two Chaucerian visions in the novel, one of them predicting the chauffeur's end, and a linking character called Constance.

The chauffeur, Leadbitter, is man as automaton, which Hartley sees as the legacy of the modern world and, especially, of war; an ex-soldier, Leadbitter calls the telephone his "best pal" and "a means of keeping up an interest in himself." With Lady Franklin he experiences the usual traumatizing emotional release common to Hartley novels, a relationship untouched by the real ("for being imaginary it was also ideal").

By rights, Hartley should be twice the writer he is; but his style becomes what the British call Mc-

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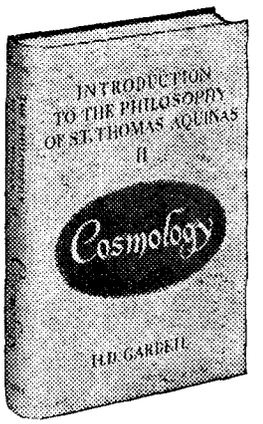


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Flannelese and his self-conscious symbolism what Mary McCarthy terms "a litany of associations." Neither seems to operate properly with contemporary subject-matter. Perhaps this explains why, with far superior verbal equipment to Snow, Hartley remains less read in this country than that author. For Americans like matter and Snow is convinced he has something to say, whereas Hartley has remained an Edwardian, a "man of letters" to whom manner is all.

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Once in America, Pat is employed as a stable boy by Mike Moriarity, a Tammany man complete with, yes, big belly, derby, and cigar. Patrick snivels and complains about his job and treatment until he marries Mike's daughter, Mary, a silent, schoolmarm type. After the marriage he snivels and complains some more, is promoted to a street-cleaning job, and helps produce two children, one the bovine heroine, Maggie-Now, and two, after a sixteen-year interval, her brother Denny. The second production is too much for Mary and she dies in childbed. This gives Miss Smith an opportunity to grind one of her favorite axes—the evils of Rome. She editorializes: "So according to the dictates of the religion, they saved the baby and let the mother die."

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but gallantly quits school, surrenders the joys of adolescence, and becomes Denny's mother and Pat's housekeeper. Everyone in the neighborhood who isn't dying or getting married finds time to cry about this. And even after a number of years, when Maggie's fortunes begin to pick up, they still cry. For, alas, Maggie's life-long ambition, a husband, turns out to be a dud.

He's a fancy talker and a Protestant. He can't give Maggie children and he runs off every spring and doesn't reappear until the first snow. Worst of all, when after years of delinquency he finally promises to stay home, he dies, and Maggie is left with a Weltschmerz that even Stella Dallas couldn't support.

The worst thing about *Maggie-Now,* however, is not its sentimentality, nor its staleness, nor even Miss Smith's monotonous narrative scheme, which grinds through four generations of tiresome people saying the same things over and over. The worst thing about *Maggie-Now* is its inexcusable lack of compassion. In dealing with the problems of the human spirit, Betty Smith exhibits very little vision, less sympathy and sensitivity, still less awareness of complexity. Her people are invariably malicious, ignorant, superstitious Liliputians. We can't hate them; we can't love them; we can't even take them seriously. Miss Smith's weakness as a novelist is a weakness that even a mediocre writer can't afford—a lack of reverence before the mystery of human personality.

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to consider a fate the Greeks ignored: the fate of one whose doom is to be a legend.

Schnabel's Odysseus is *not* a hero. The heroes, he says, "towered over me by the height of one empty head," and though his intelligence makes him well able to ape the hero, to attain a firmness others confuse with courage, that same intelligence makes him want to see the horizon "arching above me . . . the ends of the earth meeting in heaven high over my head so that with one great, sweeping glance I could seize it all." In the land of the lotus-eaters—a much more important incident for Schnabel than it was for Homer—Odysseus, stuck with Hecuba as his share of the Trojan loot, doubts the value of heroic deeds. He is freed to seek adventure instead, and drinks the liquor which breeds curiosity, which distorts not the mind but the world, under whose influence "the world twists itself into a truer light."

But Odysseus is not just a curious man. He is a responsible one, too, and though Lotus-land relieves him of the need to be a hero, it does not free him from more valid obligations. He encounters there for the first time two who follow him through his adventures—a Moor in a yellow turban and someone (Homer said it was Athena) with one brown hand and one white—who tell him to "return to himself."

Unlike his men, Odysseus does not turn his back on home, but he strives no longer to attain it, until in Scheria he suffers his final adventure and finds himself forced to return, somewhat ignominiously, to Ithaca, to *that* aspect of himself. For in Scheria he meets not only Nausicaa, with whom he falls in love, but also a near-sighted poet whose poem will have no ending if Odysseus doesn't go home.

In his climactic adventure Odysseus meets the legend he has already become, in the words of the bad poet, Demodocus, who makes him a puppet, a hollow man without conscience. Alcinous, the king, tells him to consider his sufferings as sent from heaven, for "stories need them to live." And the good poet tells him to accept such a destiny,



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for his poetic self is more real than his real self—provided he is cooperative enough to go home. He wants to choose Nausicaa, to love her and know her as he has loved and known Circe and Calypso, but the near-sighted poet determines his wavering will by having him carried in a drunken sleep to the ship which takes him to Ithaca.

Which reality is more real—Odysseus' life or the legend into which it is made and to which Odysseus is compelled to conform? Has the poet done him violence in forcing his life to form a good story? If Odysseus had been allowed to choose Nausicaa, would he truly have chosen or would he merely have been drawn by the aspect of his destiny which led to a bad myth, to the empty strutting legend of Demodocus rather than to the great one of the poet who is to be blind? *That* poet tells him that if he stays with Nausicaa, he "will simply be lost. . . . In nothingness. It would make you a man with much behind you, that is all." The poet, however, is not without interest in the case—his poem will be shapeless, without point, if Odysseus doesn't go home.

The fable is told through shifting points of view: from Odysseus to an all-seeing, neutral author who speaks at least once quite definitely from the vantage of "now" rather than "then." The device tends to confuse the story, as does the fact that preternatural elements are both debunked and introduced. One might say the technique is not entirely cricket, yet it contributes (the double point of view does, too) to the ambivalence which makes the novel the artful work it is.

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Nevertheless, there is a low blow awaiting the unwary reader, and it is this surprise which raises the book to a new stature. It is enough to make the reader re-examine his own objectivity and wonder at the author's purpose. Suffice it to say that Traver has a point to make and he doesn't forget it for one second.

It is an interesting fact that Traver's book has succeeded *By Love Possessed* at the top of the best-seller lists, for both books are about the law and lawyers and yet two books could hardly represent more different attitudes. It is good to report that no one in Traver's book says *stare dices* or very much else that is at all reminiscent of Penrose, Winner and Tuthill.

### REVIEWERS

**Robert D. Cross is the author of the recent study *Emergence of Liberal Catholicism in America*.**

**Edwin Kennebeck is on the staff of a leading New York publishing house.**

**Geoffrey Wagner, who teaches at City College in New York, is a novelist, critic and scholar.**

**James P. Degnan, Jr. is a member of the faculty at the University of Florida.**

**Marian Seldin makes her first appearance in The Commonweal with this review.**

**Anthony J. De Filipps is a free-lance writer living in New York.**

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